



The President's Daily Brief

20 April 1972

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

20 April 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The North Vietnamese are continuing to harass US ships in the Gulf of Tonkin. In South Vietnam there has been little change on the three major battle-fronts, but the Communists are making gains at local levels in many parts of the country.

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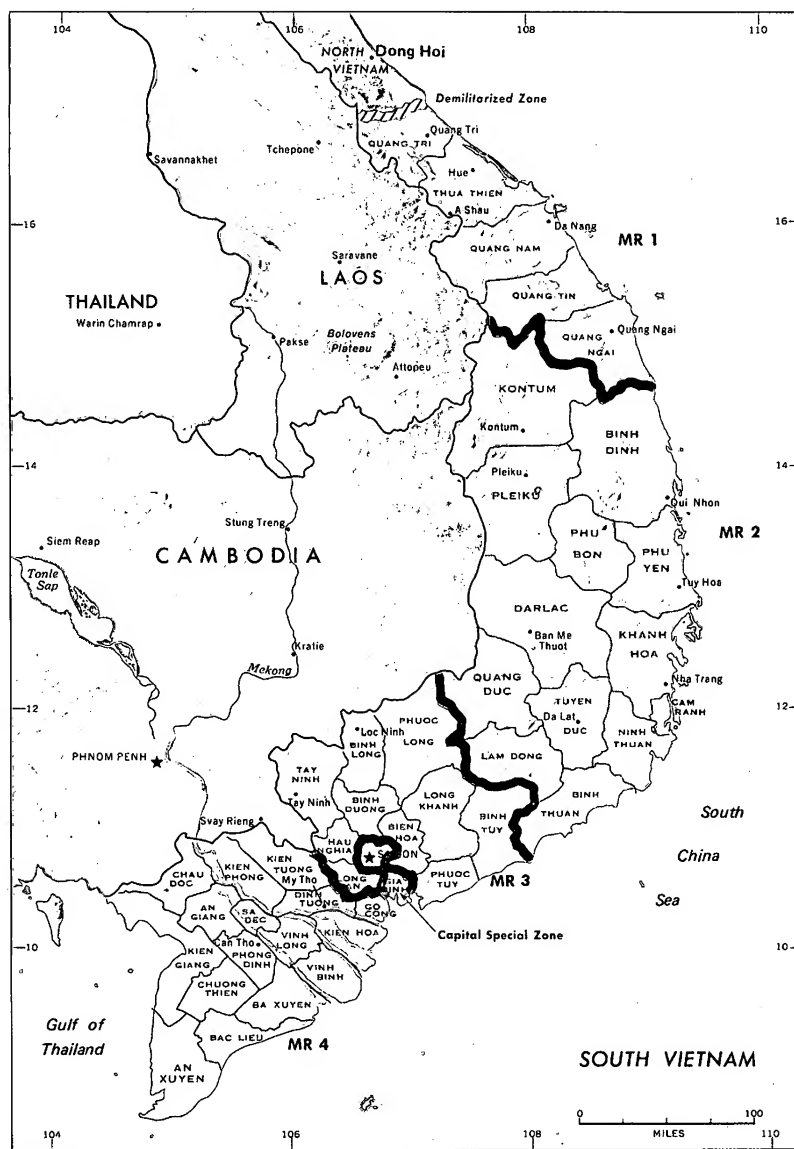
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The Council for Economic Mutual Assistance is considering opening an office in Brussels to increase cooperation with the European Communities. (Page 4)

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VIETNAM

The North Vietnamese are continuing to harass US naval vessels off the coast of North Vietnam. Yesterday two MIG-17s and several motor torpedo boats attacked four US ships east of Dong Hoi. One of the MIGs bombed the destroyer Higbee, heavily damaging the ship and causing four casualties. One of the other US ships downed a MIG with a surface-to-air missile and also apparently sank two of the motor torpedo boats.

In South Vietnam there has been little change in the situation on any of the three major battlefronts, but Communist gains at the local level in many parts of the country are becoming more apparent. Small Communist regular units and local forces throughout the country have been moving on vulnerable targets in populated areas, such as government outposts, refugee centers, and district towns. In Quang Ngai Province, although the provincial capital remains quiet, enemy units have made considerable inroads in at least two nearby districts. In neighboring Binh Dinh Province they have captured two district capitals in the past few days. The Communists have had similar successes in various other regions, including many parts of the Mekong Delta. Their efforts have been abetted in many cases by a lack of aggressiveness on the part of Saigon's provincial and militia forces.

Extending Communist influence at the local level and undermining Saigon's control in the countryside seem to be a major part of enemy plans. In many areas the Communists are following up their military efforts with attempts to establish civil administrations in newly seized territory. The North Vietnamese units that are assisting Viet Cong cadre apparently are under orders to treat the local populace well.

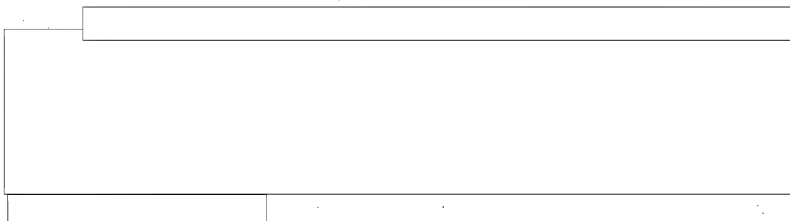
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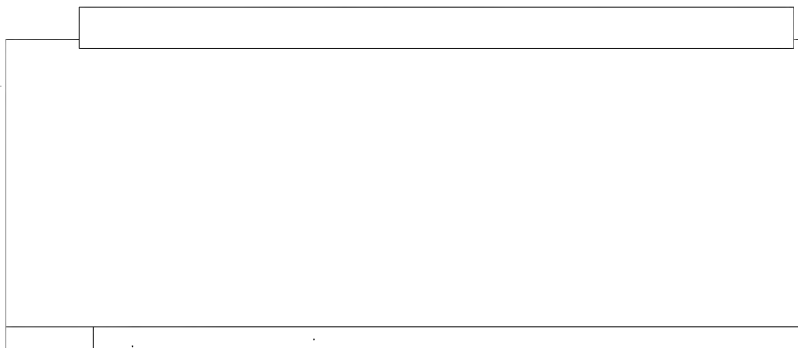
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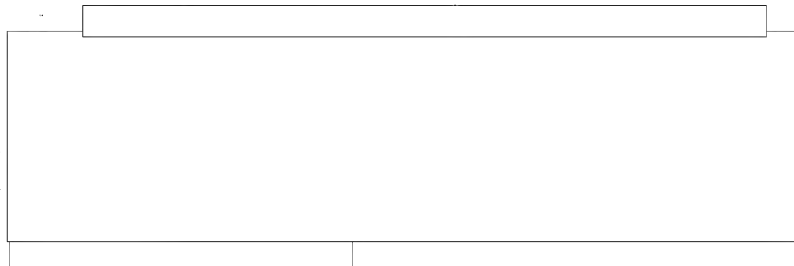
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JAPAN-CHINA



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CEMA-EC

[redacted] the Council for
Economic Mutual Assistance has under consideration
the establishment of an office in Brussels to cooper-
ate more closely with the European Communities.

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The opening
of a CEMA office in Brussels would be a
logical step following Brezhnev's public
overture on 20 March for relations be-
tween CEMA and the Communities. In addi-
tion, the channeling of Eastern European
ties to the Common Market through CEMA
would help the Soviets to keep their part-
ners under control.

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